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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2013

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/68/456/Add.2)*]

68/157. The human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010, in which it recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights,

Reaffirming the previous resolutions of the Human Rights Council regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, inter alia, Council resolution 24/18 of 27 September 2013,[1]

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[3] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[3] the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[4] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[5] the Convention on the Rights of the Child[6] and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[7]

Reaffirming its commitments to human rights as expressed in its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, entitled "United Nations Millennium Declaration", and its follow-up resolutions 60/1 of 16 September 2005, entitled "2005 World Summit Outcome", and 65/1 of 22 September 2010, entitled "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals",

Reaffirming also its resolutions 58/217 of 23 December 2003, by which it proclaimed the period from 2005 to 2015 the International Decade for Action,

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[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/68/53/Add.1), chap III.

[2] Resolution 217 A (III).

[3] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

[5] Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[7] Ibid., vol. 2515, No. 44910.

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"Water for Life", and 65/154 of 20 December 2010, by which it declared 2013 the International Year of Water Cooperation,

Recalling the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development of June 1992[8] and its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, entitled "The future we want", and emphasizing the critical importance of water and sanitation within the three dimensions of sustainable development,

Welcoming the holding of the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the human right to water and sanitation, on 27 July 2011,

Welcoming also the designation of 19 November as World Toilet Day, in the context of Sanitation for All, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/291 of 24 July 2013,

Recalling general comment No. 15 (2002) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to water (articles 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights),[9] and the statement on the right to sanitation of the Committee of 19 November 2010,[10] as well as the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation,

Deeply concerned that approximately 768 million people still lack access to improved drinking water sources and that more than 2.5 billion do not have access to improved sanitation facilities, including more than 1.04 billion people who still practice open defecation, as defined by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund in their 2013 update on the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation,[11] and that these figures do not fully capture the dimensions of water safety, the affordability of services and the safe management of excreta and wastewater, as well as equality, non-discrimination and differences between urban and rural areas, and therefore underestimate the numbers of those without access to safe drinking water and sanitation,

Noting that the target of the Millennium Development Goals of halving, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water was formally met five years ahead of schedule, and deeply concerned that the world remains off track to meet the sanitation component of the same target, which called for halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to an improved sanitation facility, that by 2015, if current trends continue, the world is set to miss the target by more than half a billion people, and that inexistent or inadequate sanitation facilities and serious deficiencies in water management and wastewater treatment can have a negative impact on water provision and sustainable access to safe drinking water,

Deeply concerned that women and girls often face particular barriers in accessing water and sanitation and that they shoulder the main burden of collecting

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[8] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[9] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 2* (E/2003/22), annex IV.

[10] Ibid., *2011, Supplement No. 2* (E/2011/22), annex VI.

[11] World Health Oganization/United Nations Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, *Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water: 2013 Update* (Geneva, 2013).

household water in many parts of the world, restricting their time for other activities,

Deeply alarmed that, every year, almost 700,000 children under 5 years of age die, and millions of schooldays are lost, as a result of water- and sanitation-related diseases, and that girls in many parts of the world do not go to school as a result of the lack of separate toilets for girls,

Reaffirming the responsibility of States to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and must be treated globally, in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis,

Recalling that the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation is derived from the right to an adequate standard of living and is inextricably related to the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as well as to the right to life and human dignity,

Acknowledging the importance of equal access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as an integral component of the realization of all human rights,

1. *Reaffirms* the recognition of the right to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights;

2. *Recognizes* the need to give due consideration to the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular while defining concrete goals, targets and indicators, taking into account an approach that supports the promotion and protection of human rights;

3. *Welcomes* the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation by the Human Rights Council;[1]

4. *Also welcomes* the work of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, and takes note with appreciation in particular of her reports[12] and her contributions to shaping the post-2015 development agenda and to progressively eliminating inequalities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation;

5. *Takes note* of the recommendation in the report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda,[13] commissioned by the Secretary-General, in which the Panel lists water and sanitation among the illustrative goals in the post-2015 development agenda, and also takes note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015",[14] in which the Secretary-General recognizes the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation as one of the foundations for a decent life;

6. *Calls upon* States:

[12] A/67/270 and A/68/264.

[13] See A/67/890, annex.

[14] A/68/202 and Corr.1.

(*a*) To ensure the progressive realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation;

(*b*) To continuously monitor and regularly analyse the status of the realization of the human right to safe drinking water;

(*c*) To give due consideration to the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

(*d*) To ensure the progressive realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation for all in a non-discriminatory manner while eliminating inequalities in access, including for individuals belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups, on the grounds of race, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, culture, religion and national or social origin or on any other grounds and with a view to progressively eliminating inequalities based on factors such as rural-urban disparities, residence in a slum, income levels and other relevant considerations;

(*e*) To consult with communities on adequate solutions to ensure sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation;

(*f*) To provide for effective accountability mechanisms for all water and sanitation service providers to ensure that they respect human rights and do not cause human rights violations or abuses;

7. *Invites* regional and international organizations to complement efforts by States to progressively realize the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation;

8. *Encourages* Member States to intensify global partnerships for development as means to achieve and sustain the targets of the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation;

9. *Reaffirms* that States have the primary responsibility to ensure the full realization of all human rights and to endeavour to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of their available resources, with a view to progressively achieving the full realization of the right to safe drinking water and sanitation by all appropriate means, including in particular the adoption of legislative measures;

10. *Stresses* the important role of the international cooperation and technical assistance provided by States, specialized agencies of the United Nations system and international and development partners, as well as by donor agencies, in particular in the timely achievement of the relevant Millennium Development Goals, and urges development partners to adopt a human rights-based approach when designing and implementing development programmes in support of national initiatives and plans of action related to the right to safe drinking water and sanitation;

11. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the question at its sixty-ninth session.

70th plenary meeting
18 December 2013